

**Testimony of
Kenneth Stone, M.D.
before the
Public Health Committee
on
House Bill 5902
"An Act Concerning Hospital Staffing and Patient Access to Deep
Sedation and General Anesthesia"**

March 12, 2008

Madame. Chairmen. Members of the Committee. My name is Kenneth Stone. I am a board certified anesthesiologist engaged in a group practice that is affiliated with Bridgeport Hospital, and we also provide care at ambulatory surgical facilities in Milford and Wilton. I serve as the President of the Connecticut State Society of Anesthesiologists. I come before you today to comment on House Bill 5902, "An Act Concerning Hospital Staffing and Patient Access to Deep Sedation and General Anesthesia."

My comments are directed at Sections 2 and 3 of this Bill, which address coverage of medical procedures that require deep sedation or general anesthesia.

Whenever questions arise about coverage of medical procedures by insurance companies, it is our opinion that medical necessity is best determined by the treating physician in discussion with the patient and with other physicians who may be involved with that patient's care. The physician who actually performs a procedure is the best judge of medical necessity for the type of sedation that may be required.

When 'deep sedation' is administered, it is frequently performed by the treating physician and an assistant, such as a nurse. Depending upon the circumstances, it may also be provided by a trained anesthesia professional. In either case, the choice of technique and provider is most appropriately determined by the physician who performs the procedure. It is also important that the personnel who administer sedative medication be properly trained in doing so, and that they conform to all relevant standards of care as established by state and federal law and regulations, survey and accrediting organizations, professional societies and community standards.

When 'general anesthesia' is performed, it should be administered only by qualified anesthesia personnel in a setting that is appropriately stocked with anesthesia drugs and equipment and which meet the standards of any operating room in any facility in which general anesthesia is administered.

In all circumstances, patient safety is the guiding principle. Properly trained personnel and appropriately equipped facilities must be present whenever deep sedation or general anesthesia is administered.